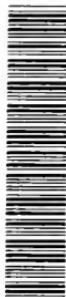


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ENCE; *or* BUNTHORNE'S BRIDE
by
W. S. Gilbert

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PATIENCE; OR
BUNTHORNE'S BRIDE

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Patience ;
or
Bunthorne's Bride

By
W. S. GILBERT

With new introduction



NEW YORK
Doubleday, Page & Company
1902

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Published September, 1902

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE genesis of "Patience" is to be found in the "Bab Ballad," called "The Rival Curates." In the original draft of the MS. of my play Reginald Bunthorne and Archibald Grosvenor were two clergymen belonging to adjoining parishes, as in the ballad, and the Reverend Mr. Bunthorne was attended by a team of enthusiastic lady worshippers who had been fascinated by the lamb-like meekness of his demeanour. In the course of the piece this body of devotees, having discovered that the Reverend Mr. Grosvenor was even meeker than Mr. Bunthorne, transferred their affections, *en bloc*, to Mr. Grosvenor, one admirer only, Lady Jane, remaining faithful to Mr. Bunthorne. Enraged at this successful opposition, Mr. Bunthorne commissioned Lady Jane to go to Mr. Grosvenor and explain to him, in the fiercest and most uncompromising terms, that unless he abandoned, at once, his blameless attitude, and forthwith became a reckless and unconventional renegade, holding the broadest possible views of his duties as a clergyman, the consequences to him would be of the most painful and humiliating description. Lady Jane faithfully and successfully discharged this mission (entrusted in the ballad to the

Author's Note

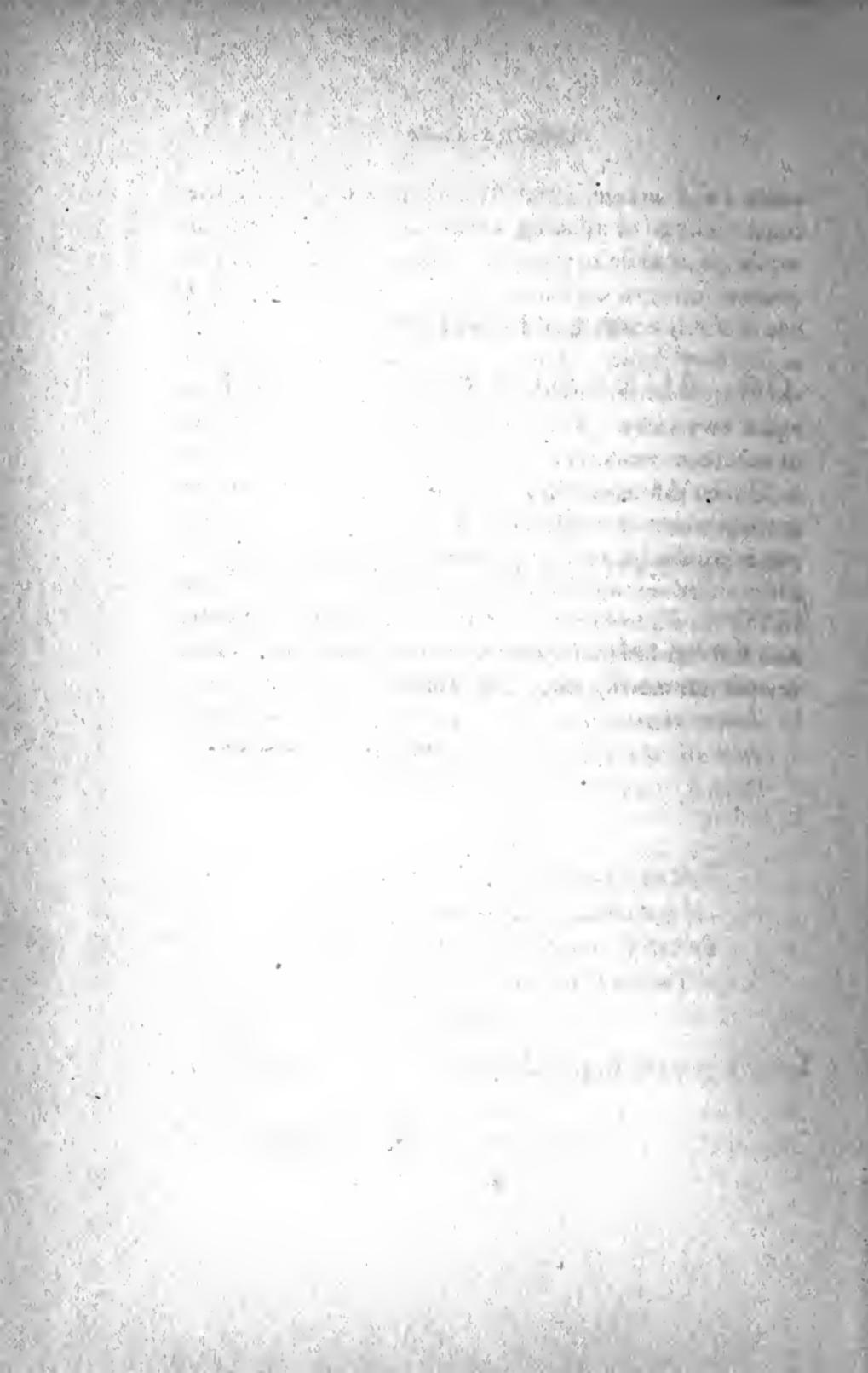
sexton and the beadle), and Mr. Grosvenor, who had no real sympathy with an attitude that only an overwhelming sense of duty had compelled him to adopt, joyfully acceded to Bunthorne's requirements, satisfying his conscience with the excuse that his wholesale violation of clerical proprieties was the effect of an irresistible *force majeure*. A body of dragoons was introduced who, having endeavoured in vain to divert the attention of the young ladies from the fascinating curates, determined at length to "take orders," and, having done so, were rewarded for their enterprising *volte face* by the ladies who had in the meantime become thoroughly disgusted with the conduct of the adored curates.

While I was engaged upon the construction of this plot, I became uneasy at the thought of the danger I was incurring by dealing so freely with members of the clerical order, and I felt myself crippled at every turn by the necessity of protecting myself from a charge of irreverence. So I cast about for a group of personages who should fit, more or less neatly, into the plot as already devised, and who should allow me a freer hand in making them amusing to my audiences. At that time the so-called "æsthetic craze" was just becoming popular, mainly owing to the late Mr. Du Maurier's admirable pictorial satires in *Punch*. As I lay awake one night, worrying over the difficulties that I had prepared for myself, the idea suddenly flashed upon me that if I made Bunthorne and Grosvenor a couple of yearning "æsthetics" and the young

Author's Note

ladies their ardent admirers, all anxieties as to the consequences of making them extremely ridiculous would be at once overcome. Elated at the idea, I ran down at once to my library, and in an hour or so I had entirely rearranged the piece upon a secure and satisfactory basis. The "æsthetes" were accepted without hesitation by the public, and the piece ran for about two years. When it was revived after a lapse of nineteen years, the "asthetic craze" was as dead as Queen Anne, and no little anxiety was felt by the management of the Savoy Theatre as to how the piece would be received. However, we were not a little surprised and relieved to find that the allusions to the absurdities formerly connected with the mania had lost nothing of their normal significance. The revival ran merrily for eight months.

W. S. GILBERT.



PATIENCE;
OR BUNTHORNE'S BRIDE

ACT I

SCENE—EXTERIOR OF CASTLE BUNTHORNE.

Entrance to Castle by drawbridge over moat.

Young ladies dressed in classical draperies are grouped about the stage. They play on lutes, mandolins, &c., as they sing, and all are in the last stage of despair. ANGELA, ELLA, and SAPHIR lead them.

CHORUS

Twenty love-sick maidens we,

Love-sick all against our will.

Twenty years hence we shall be

Twenty love-sick maidens still.

SOLO—ANGELA

Love feeds on hope, they say, or love will die—

ALL

Ah, miserie !

Patience

ANGELA

Yet my love lives, although no hope have I !

ALL

Ah, miserie !

ANGELA

Alas, poor heart, go hide thyself away—

ALL

Ah, miserie !

ANGELA

To weeping concords tune thy roundelay !

ALL

Ah, miserie !

CHORUS

All our love is all for one,

Yet that love he heedeth not,

He is coy and cares for none,

Sad and sorry is our lot !

Ah, miserie !

SOLO—ELLA

Go, breaking heart,

Go, dream of love requited;

Go, foolish heart,

Go, dream of lovers plighted;

Go, madcap heart,

Go, dream of never waking;

Patience

And in thy dream
Forget that thou art breaking !

ALL

Ah, miserie !

ANGELA

There is a strange magic in this love of ours !
Rivals as we all are in the affections of our
Reginald, the very hopelessness of our love is
a bond that binds us to one another !

SAPHIR

Jealousy is merged in misery. While he, the
very cynosure of our eyes and hearts, remains
icy insensible—what have we to strive for ?

ELLA

The love of maidens is, to him, as interesting
as the taxes !

SAPHIR

Would that it were ! He pays his taxes.

ANGELA

And cherishes the receipts !

(Enter LADY JANE.)

JANE (*suddenly*)

Fools !

ANGELA

I beg your pardon ?

Patience

JANE

Fools and blind ! The man loves—wildly loves !

ANGELA

But whom ? None of us !

JANE

No, none of us. His weird fancy has lighted, for the nonce, on Patience, the village milk-maid !

SAPHIR

On Patience ? Oh, it cannot be !

JANE

Bah ! But yesterday I caught him in her dairy, eating fresh butter with a tablespoon. To-day he is not well !

SAPHIR

But Patience boasts that she has never loved—that love is, to her, a sealed book ! Oh, he cannot be serious !

JANE

'Tis but a fleeting fancy—'twill quickly pass away. (*Aside.*) Oh, Reginald, if you but knew what a wealth of golden love is waiting for you, stored up in this rugged old bosom of mine, the milkmaid's triumph would be short indeed ! (*All sigh wearily.*)

Patience

(PATIENCE appears on an eminence. She looks down with pity on the despondent ladies.)

PATIENCE

Still brooding on their mad infatuation !
I thank thee, Love, thou comest not to me !
Far happier I, free from thy ministration,
Than dukes or duchesses who love can be !

SAPHIR (*looking up*)

'Tis Patience—happy girl ! Loved by a Poet !

PATIENCE

Your pardon, ladies. I intrude upon you !
(*Going.*)

ANGELA

Nay, pretty, child, come hither. Is it true
That you have never loved ?

PATIENCE

Most true indeed.

SOPRANOS

Most marvellous !

CONTRALTOS

And most deplorable !

SONG—PATIENCE

I cannot tell what this love may be
That cometh to all, but not to me.

Patience

It cannot be kind as they'd imply,
Or why do these gentle ladies sigh?
It cannot be joy and rapture deep,
Or why do these gentle ladies weep?
It cannot be blissful as 'tis said,
Or why are their eyes so wondrous red?

Though everywhere true love I see
A-coming to all, but not to me,
I cannot tell what this love may be!
For I am blithe and I am gay,
While they sit sighing all night, all day.
Think of the gulf 'twixt them and me,
“Fal la la la!”—and “Miserie!”

CHORUS

Yes, she is blithe, &c.

PATIENCE

If love is a thorn, they show no wit
Who foolishly hug and foster it.
If love is a weed, how simple they
Who gather and gather it, day by day!
If love is a nettle that makes you smart,
Why do you wear it next your heart?
And if it be none of these, say I,
Why do you sit and sob and sigh?

Though everywhere, &c.

Patience

CHORUS

For she is blithe, &c.

ANGELA

Ah, Patience, if you have never loved, you
have never known true happiness! (*All sigh.*)

PATIENCE

But the truly happy always seem to have so
much on their minds. The truly happy
never seem quite well.

JANE

There is a transcendentality of delirium—an
acute accentuation of supremest esctasy—
which the earthy might easily mistake for in-
digestion. But it is *not* indigestion—it is æs-
thetic transfiguration! (*To the others.*) Enough
of babble. Come!

PATIENCE

But I have some news for you. The Thirty-
fifth Dragoon Guards have halted in the village,
and are even now on their way to this very
spot.

ANGELA

The Thirty-fifth Dragoon Guards!

SAPHIR

They are fleshly men, of full habit!

Patience

ELLA

We care nothing for Dragoon Guards !

PATIENCE

But, bless me, you were all in love with them
a year ago !

SAPHIR

A year ago !

ANGELA

My poor child, you don't understand these things. A year ago they were very well in our eyes, but since then our tastes have been etherialized, our perceptions exalted. (*To others.*) Come, it is time to lift up our voices in morning carol to our Reginald. Let us to his door.

The ladies go off, two and two, into the Castle, singing refrain of "Twenty love-sick maidens we," and accompanying themselves on harps and mandolins. PATIENCE watches them in surprise, as she climbs the rock by which she entered.

March. Enter Officers of Dragoon Guards, led by MAJOR.

CHORUS OF DRAGOONS

The soldiers of our Queen
Are linked in friendly tether;

Patience

Upon the battle scene
They fight the foe together.
There every mother's son
Prepared to fight and fall is;
The enemy of one
The enemy of all is!

Enter COLONEL

SONG—COLONEL

If you want a receipt for that popular mystery,
Known to the world as a Heavy Dragoon,
Take all the remarkable people in history,
Rattle them off to a popular tune.
The pluck of Lord Nelson on board of the
Victory—
Genius of Bismarck devising a plan—
The humour of Fielding (which sounds contradic-
tory)—
Coolness of Paget about to trepan—
The science of Jullien, the eminent musico—
Wit of Macaulay, who wrote of Queen
Anne—
The pathos of Paddy, as rendered by Bouci-
cault—
Style of the Bishop of Sodor and Man—
The dash of a D'Orsay, divested of quackery—
Narrative powers of Dickens and Thackeray—

Patience

Victor Emmanuel—peak-haunting Peveril—
Thomas Aquinas, the Doctor Sacheverell—
Tupper and Tennyson—Daniel Defoe—
Anthony Trollope and Mr. Guizot !

Take of these elements all that is fusible,
Melt them all down in a pipkin or crucible,
Set them to simmer and take off the scum,
And a Heavy Dragoon is the residuum !

CHORUS

Yes ! yes ! yes ! yes !
A Heavy Dragoon is the residuum !

COLONEL

If you want a receipt for this soldier-like paragon,

Get at the wealth of the Czar (if you can)—
The family pride of a Spaniard from Arragon—
Force of Mephisto pronouncing a ban—
A smack of Lord Waterford, reckless and rollicky—

Swagger of Roderick, heading his clan—
The keen penetration of Paddington Pollaky—
Grace of an Odalisque on a divan—
The genius strategic of Cæsar or Hannibal—
Skill of Sir Garnet in thrashing a cannibal—

Patience

Flavour of Hamlet—the Stranger, a touch of him—

Little of Manfred (but not very much of him)—
Beadle of Burlington—Richardson's show—
Mr. Micawber and Madame Tussaud !

Take of these elements all that is fusible,
Melt them all down in a pipkin or crucible,
Set them to simmer and take off the scum,
And a Heavy Dragoon is the residuum !

ALL

Yes ! yes ! yes ! yes !
A Heavy Dragoon is the residuum !

COLONEL

Well, here we are again on the scene of our former triumphs. But where's the Duke?

Enter DUKE OF DUNSTABLE, listlessly, and in low spirits.

DUKE

Here I am ! (Sighs.)

COLONEL

Come, cheer up, don't give way !

DUKE

Oh, for that, I'm as cheerful as a poor devil can be expected to be, who has the misfortune to be a duke, with a thousand a day !

Patience

MAJOR

Humph ! Most men would envy you !

DUKE

Envy *me*? Tell me, Major, are you fond of toffee?

MAJOR

Very !

COLONEL

We are all fond of toffee.

ALL

We are !

DUKE

Yes, and toffee in moderation is a capital thing. But to *live* on toffee—toffee for breakfast, toffee for dinner, toffee for tea—to have it supposed that you care for nothing *but* toffee, and that you would consider yourself insulted if anything but toffee were offered to you—how would you like *that*?

COLONEL

I can believe that, under those circumstances, even toffee would become monotonous.

DUKE

For “toffee” read flattery, adulation, and abject deference, carried to such a pitch that I

Patience

began, at last, to think that man was born bent at an angle of forty-five degrees! Great heavens, what is there to adulate in me! Am I particularly intelligent, or remarkably studious, or excruciatingly witty, or unusually accomplished, or exceptionally virtuous?

COLONEL

You're about as commonplace a young man as ever I saw.

ALL

You are!

DUKE

Exactly! That's it exactly! That describes me to a T! Thank you all very much! Well, I couldn't stand it any longer, so I joined this regiment. In the army, thought I, I shall be occasionally snubbed, perhaps even bullied, who knows? The thought was rapture, and here I am.

COLONEL (*looking off*)

Yes, and here are the ladies!

DUKE

But who is the gentleman with the long hair?

COLONEL

I don't know.

Patience

DUKE

He seems popular !

COLONEL

He *does* seem popular !

BUNTHORNE enters, followed by ladies, two and two, singing and playing on harps as before. He is composing a poem, and quite absorbed. He sees no one, but walks across stage followed by ladies. They take no notice of Dragoons—to the surprise and indignation of those Officers.

CHORUS OF LADIES

In a melancholy train

Two and two we walk all day—

Pity those who love in vain !

None so sorrowful as they

Who can only sigh and say,

Woe is me, alackaday !

CHORUS OF DRAGOONS

Now is not this ridiculous—and is not this preposterous ?

A thorough-paced absurdity—explain it if you can.

Patience

Instead of rushing eagerly to cherish us and
foster us,

They all prefer this melancholy literary man.

Instead of slyly peering at us,

Casting looks endearing at us,

Blushing at us, flushing at us—flirting with a
fan:

They're actually sneering at us, fleering at us,
jeering at us !

Pretty sort of treatment for a military man !

Pretty sort of treatment for a military man !

CHORUS OF LADIES

Mystic poet, hear our prayer,

Twenty-love sick maidens we—

Young and wealthy, dark and fair—

And we die for love of thee !

Yes, we die for love of thee—

Twenty love-sick maidens we !

BUNTHORNE (*aside—slyly*)

Though my book I seem to scan

In a rapt ecstatic way,

Like a literary man

Who despises female clay,

I hear plainly all they say,

Twenty love-sick maidens they !

Patience

OFFICERS (*to each other*)

He hears plainly, &c.

ELLA

Though so excellently wise,

For a moment mortal be,

Deign to raise thy purple eyes

From thy heart-drawn poesy.

Twenty love-sick maidens see—

Each is kneeling on her knee ! (*All kneel.*)

CHORUS OF LADIES

Twenty love-sick, &c.

BUNTHORNE (*aside*)

Though, as I remarked before,

Any one convinced would be

That some transcendental lore

Is monopolizing me,

Round the corner I can see

Each is kneeling on her knee !

OFFICERS (*to each other*)

Round the corner, &c.

ENSEMBLE

OFFICERS

Now is not this ridiculous, &c.

Patience

LADIES

Mystic poet, hear our prayer, &c.

BUNTHORNE (*aside*)

Though my book I seem to scan, &c.

COLONEL

Angela ! what is the meaning of this ?

ANGELA

Oh, sir, leave us ; our minds are but ill-attuned
to light love-talk.

MAJOR

But what in the world has come over you all ?

JANE

Bunthorne ! *He* has come over us. *He* has
come among us, and he has idealized us.

DUKE

Has he succeeded in idealizing *you* ?

JANE

He has !

DUKE

Bravo, Bunthorne !

JANE

My eyes are open ; I droop despairingly ; I
am soulfully intense ; I am limp and I cling !

Patience

(During this BUNTHORNE is seen in all the agonies of composition. The ladies are watching him intently as he writhes. At last, he hits on the word he wants and writes it down. A general sense of relief.)

BUNTHORNE

Finished! At last! Finished!

(He staggers, overcome with the mental strain, into arms of COLONEL.)

COLONEL

Are you better now?

BUNTHORNE

Yes—Oh, it's you—I am better now. The poem is finished, and my soul has gone out into it. That was all. It was nothing worth mentioning, it occurs three times a day. (Sees PATIENCE, who has entered during this scene.) Ah, Patience! Dear Patience! (Holds her hand; she seems frightened.)

ANGELA

Will it please you to read it to us, sir?

SAPHIR

This we supplicate. (All kneel.)

BUNTHORNE

Shall I?

Patience

ALL THE DRAGOONS

No !

BUNTHORNE (*annoyed—to PATIENCE*)

I will read it if *you* bid me !

PATIENCE (*much frightened*)

You can if you like !

BUNTHORNE

It is a wild, weird, fleshly thing; yet very tender, very yearning, very precious. It is called, “Oh, Hollow ! Hollow ! Hollow !”

PATIENCE

Is it a hunting song ?

BUNTHORNE

A hunting song ? No, it is *not* a hunting song. It is the wail of the poet’s heart on discovering that everything is commonplace. To understand it, cling passionately to one another and think of faint lilies. (*They do so as he recites*)—

“OH, HOLLOW ! HOLLOW ! HOLLOW !”

What time the poet hath hymned
The writhing maid, lithe-limbed,
Quivering on amaranthine asphodel,

Patienc

How can he paint her woes,
Knowing, as well he knows,
That all can be set right with calomel?

When from the poet's plinth
The amorous colocynth
Yearns for the aloe, faint with rapturous
thrills,
How can he hymn their throes
Knowing, as well he knows,
That they are only uncompounded pills?

Is it, and can it be,
Nature hath this decree,
Nothing poetic in the world shall dwell?
Or that in all her works
Something poetic lurks,
Even in colocynth and calomel?
I cannot tell.

ANGELA

How purely fragrant!

SAPHIR

How earnestly precious!

DUKE

Well, it seems to me to be nonsense.

SAPHIR

Nonsense, yes, perhaps—but oh, what precious nonsense!

ALL

Ah !

COLONEL

This is all very well, but you seem to forget
that you are engaged to us.

SAPHIR

It can never be. You are not Empyrean.
You are not Della Cruscan. You are not even
Early English. Oh, be Early English ere it is
too late ! (*Officers look at each other in astonish-
ment.*)

JANE (*looking at uniform*)

Red and yellow ! Primary colours ! Oh,
South Kensington !

DUKE

We didn't design our uniforms, but we don't
see how they could be improved.

JANE

No, you wouldn't. Still, there *is* a cobwebby
grey velvet, with a tender bloom like cold
gravy, which, made Florentine fourteenth cen-
tury, trimmed with Venetian leather and
Spanish altar lace, and surmounted with some-
thing Japanese—it matters not what—would at
least be Early English ! Come, maidens. (*Ex-
eunt maidens, two and two, singing refrain of*

Patience

"Twenty love-sick maidens we." *The Officers watch them off in astonishment.*)

DUKE

Gentlemen, this is an insult to the British uniform—

COLONEL

A uniform that has been as successful in the courts of Venus as in the field of Mars !

SONG—COLONEL

When I first put this uniform on,

I said, as I looked in the glass,

"It's one to a million

That any civilian

My figure and form will surpass.

Gold lace has a charm for the fair,

And I've plenty of that, and to spare,

While a lover's professions,

When uttered in Hessians,

Are eloquent everywhere!"

A fact that I counted upon,

When I first put this uniform on !

CHORUS OF DRAGOONS

By a simple coincidence, few

Could ever have reckoned upon,

The same thing occurred to me, too,

When I first put this uniform on !

Patience

COLONEL

I said, when I first put it on,
“It is plain to the veriest dunce
That every beauty
Will feel it her duty

To yield to its glamour at once.

They will see that I’m freely gold-laced
In a uniform handsome and chaste”—

But the peripatetics
Of long-haired æsthetics
Are very much more to their taste—
Which I never counted upon,
When I first put this uniform on !

CHORUS

By a simple coincidence, few
Could ever have counted upon,
I didn’t anticipate that,
When I first put this uniform on !

[*The Dragoons go off angrily.*

(As soon as he is alone, BUNTHORNE changes his manner and becomes intensely melodramatic.)

RECITATIVE AND SONG—BUNTHORNE

Am I alone,
And unobserved? I am!
Then let me own
I’m an æsthetic sham!

This air severe
Is but a mere
Veneer !
This cynic smile
Is but a wile
Of guile !

This costume chaste
Is but good taste
Misplaced !

Let me confess !

A languid love for lilies does *not* blight me !
Lank limbs and haggard cheeks do *not* delight
me !

I do *not* care for dirty greens
By any means.

I do *not* long for all one sees
That's Japanese.

I am *not* fond of uttering platitudes
In stained-glass attitudes.

In short, my mediævalism's affectation,
Born of a morbid love of admiration !

SONG

If you're anxious for to shine in the high æsthetic
line as a man of culture rare,
You must get up all the germs of the trans-
cendental terms, and plant them every-
where.

Patience

You must lie upon the daisies and discourse
in novel phrases of your complicated
state of mind,

The meaning doesn't matter if it's only idle
chatter of a transcendental kind.

And every one will say,

As you walk your mystic way,

"If this young man expresses himself in terms
too deep for *me*,

Why, what a very singularly deep young man
this deep young man must be!"

Be eloquent in praise of the very dull old days
which have long since passed away,
And convince 'em, if you can, that the reign
of good Queen Anne was Culture's
palmiest day.

Of course you will pooh-pooh whatever's fresh
and new, and declare it's crude and mean,
For Art stopped short in the cultivated court
of the Empress Josephine.

And every one will say,

As you walk your mystic way,

"If that's not good enough for him which is not
good enough for *me*,

Why, what a very cultivated kind of youth this
kind of youth must be!"

Patience

Then a sentimental passion of a vegetable fashion must excite your languid spleen,
An attachment *à la* Plato for a bashful young potato, or a not-too-French French bean !
Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle in the high æsthetic band,
If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in your mediæval hand.

And every one will say,
As you walk your flowery way,
“If he’s content with a vegetable love which would certainly not suit *me*,
Why, what a most particularly pure young man this pure young man must be !”

[At the end of his song PATIENCE enters. He sees her.

BUNTHORNE

Ah ! Patience, come hither. I am pleased with thee. The bitter-hearted one, who finds all else hollow, is pleased with thee. For you are not hollow. Are you ?

PATIENCE

I beg your pardon—I interrupt you.

BUNTHORNE

Life is made up of interruptions. The tor-

Patience

tured soul, yearning for solitude, writhes under them. Oh, but my heart is a-weary ! Oh, I am a cursed thing ! Don't go.

PATIENCE

Really, I'm very sorry——

BUNTHORNE

Tell me, girl, do you ever yearn ?

PATIENCE (*misunderstanding him*)

I earn my living.

BUNTHORNE (*impatiently*)

No, no ! Do you know what it is to be heart-hungry ? Do you know what it is to yearn for the Indefinable, and yet to be brought face to face, daily, with the Multiplication Table ? Do you know what it is to seek oceans and to find puddles ?—to long for whirlwinds and to have to do the best thing you can with the bellows ? That's my case. Oh, I am a cursed thing !

PATIENCE

If you please, I don't understand you—you frighten me !

BUNTHORNE

Don't be frightened—it's only poetry.

PATIENCE

If that's poetry, I don't like poetry.

Patience

BUNTHORNE (*eagerly*)

Don't you? (*Aside.*) Can I trust her? (*Aloud.*) Patience, you don't like poetry—well, between you and me, *I* don't like poetry. It's hollow, unsubstantial—unsatisfactory. What's the use of yearning for Elysian Fields when you know you can't get 'em, and would only let 'em out on building leases if you had 'em?

PATIENCE

Sir, I—

BUNTHORNE

Don't go. Patience, I have long loved you. Let me tell you a secret. I am not as bilious as I look. If you like I will cut my hair. There is more innocent fun within me than a casual spectator would imagine. You have never seen me frolicsome. Be a good girl—a very good girl—and you shall.

PATIENCE

Sir, I will speak plainly. In the matter of love I am untaught. I have never loved but my great-aunt. But I am quite certain that, under any circumstances, I couldn't possibly love *you*.

BUNTHORNE

Oh, you think not?

Patience

PATIENCE

I'm quite sure of it. Quite sure. Quite.

BUNTHORNE (*releasing her*)

Very good. Life is henceforth a blank. I don't care what becomes of me. I have only to ask that you will not abuse my confidence: though *you* despise me, I am extremely popular with the other young ladies.

PATIENCE

I only ask that you will leave me and never renew the subject.

BUNTHORNE

Certainly. Broken-hearted and desolate I go. (*Recites.*)

“Oh, to be wafted away,
From this black Aceldama of sorrow,
Where the dust of an earthy to-day
Is the earth of a dusty to-morrow !”

It is a little thing of my own. I call it “Heart Foam.” I shall not publish it. Farewell !

[*Exit BUNTHORNE.*]

PATIENCE

What on earth does it all mean? Why does he love me? Why does he expect me to love him? He's not a relation! It frightens me!

Patience

Enter ANGELA

ANGELA

Why, Patience, what is the matter?

PATIENCE

Lady Angela, tell me two things. Firstly, what on earth is this love that upsets everybody; and, secondly, how is it to be distinguished from insanity?

ANGELA

Poor blind child! Oh, forgive her, Eros! Why, love is of all passions the most essential! It is the embodiment of purity, the abstraction of refinement! it is the one unselfish emotion in this whirlpool of grasping greed!

PATIENCE

Oh, dear, oh! (*Beginning to cry.*)

ANGELA

Why are you crying?

PATIENCE

To think that I have lived all these years without having experienced this ennobling and unselfish passion! Why, what a wicked girl I must be! For it *is* unselfish, isn't it?

ANGELA

Absolutely. Love that is tainted with selfishness is no love. Oh, try, try, try to love! It

Patience

really isn't difficult if you give your whole mind to it.

PATIENCE

I'll set about it at once. I won't go to bed until I'm head over ears in love with somebody.

ANGELA

Noble girl. But is it possible that you have never loved anybody?

PATIENCE

Yes, one.

ANGELA

Ah, whom?

PATIENCE

My great-aunt—

ANGELA

Your great-aunt doesn't count.

PATIENCE

Then there's nobody. At least—no, nobody. Not since I was a baby. But *that* doesn't count, I suppose.

ANGELA

I don't know—tell me all about it.

DUET—PATIENCE AND ANGELA

PATIENCE

Long years ago, fourteen, maybe

When but a tiny babe of four,

Patience

Another baby played with me,
My elder by a year or more.
A little child of beauty rare,
With marvellous eyes and wondrous hair,
Who, in my child-eyes, seemed to me
All that a little child should be !

Ah, how we loved, that child and I,
How pure our baby joy !
How true our love—and, by the bye,
He was a little boy !

ANGELA

Ah, old, old tale of Cupid's touch !
I thought as much—I thought as much !
 He was a little boy !

PATIENCE (*shocked*)
Pray don't misconstrue what I say—
Remember, pray—remember, pray,
He was a *little* boy !

ANGELA

No doubt, yet spite of all your pains,
The interesting fact remains—
 He was a little boy !

ENSEMBLE

Ah, yes, } in spite of all { my } pains, &c.
No doubt } { her }
[Exit ANGELA.

Patience

PATIENCE

It's perfectly appalling to think of the dreadful state I must be in! I had no idea that love was a duty. No wonder they all look so unhappy. Upon my word, I hardly like to associate with myself. I don't think I'm respectable. I'll go at once and fall in love with—
(Enter GROSVENOR.) A stranger!

DUET—PATIENCE AND GROSVENOR

GROSVENOR

Prithee, pretty maiden—prithee tell me true,
(Hey but I'm doleful, willow willow waly !)
Have you e'er a lover a-dangling after you?
Hey willow waly O !
I would fain discover
If you have a lover?
Hey willow waly O !

PATIENCE

Gentle sir, my heart is frolicsome and free—
(Hey but he's doleful, willow willow waly !)
Nobody I care for comes a-courtin' me—
Hey willow waly O !
Nobody I care for
Comes a-courtin'—therefore,
Hey willow waly O !

Patience

GROSVENOR

Prithee, pretty maiden, will you marry me?
(Hey but I'm hopeful, willow willow waly !)
I may say, at once, I'm a man of propertee—
Hey willow waly O !
Money, I despise it,
But many people prize it,
Hey willow waly O !

PATIENCE

Gentle sir, although to marry I design—
(Hey but he's hopeful, willow willow waly !)
As yet I do not know you, and so I must decline,
Hey willow waly O !
To other maidens go you—
As yet I do not know you,
Hey willow waly O !

GROSVENOR

Patience ! Can it be that you don't recognize
me ?

PATIENCE

Recognize you ? No, indeed I don't !

GROSVENOR

Have fifteen years so greatly changed me ?

PATIENCE

Fifteen years ? What do you mean ?

Patience

GROSVENOR

Have you forgotten the friend of your youth,
your Archibald?—your little playfellow? Oh,
Chronos, Chronos, this is too bad of you!

PATIENCE

Archibald! Is it possible? Why, let me
look! It is! It is! It must be! Oh, how
happy I am! I thought we should never meet
again! And how you've grown!

GROSVENOR

Yes, Patience, I am much taller and much
stouter than I was.

PATIENCE

And how you've improved!

GROSVENOR

Yes, Patience, I am very beautiful. (*Sighs.*)

PATIENCE

But surely *that* doesn't make you unhappy?

GROSVENOR

Yes, Patience. Gifted as I am with a beauty
which probably has not its rival on earth, I am,
nevertheless, utterly and completely miserable.

PATIENCE

Oh—but why?

Patience

GROSVENOR

My child-love for you has never faded. Conceive, then, the horror of my situation when I tell you that it is my hideous destiny to be madly loved by every woman I come across!

PATIENCE

But why do you make yourself so picturesque? Why not disguise yourself, disfigure yourself, anything to escape this persecution?

GROSVENOR

No, Patience, that may not be. These gifts—irksome as they are—have been confided to me for the enjoyment and delectation of my fellow-creatures. I am a trustee for Beauty, and it is my duty to see that the conditions of my trust are faithfully discharged.

PATIENCE

And you, too, are a poet?

GROSVENOR

Yes, I am the Apostle of Simplicity. I am called "Archibald the All-Right"—for I am infallible!

PATIENCE

And is it possible that you condescend to love such a girl as I?

Patience

GROSVENOR

Yes, Patience, is it not strange? I have loved you with a Florentine fourteenth-century frenzy for full fifteen years!

PATIENCE

Oh, marvellous! I have hitherto been deaf to the voice of love—I seem now to know what love is! It has been revealed to me—it is Archibald Grosvenor!

GROSVENOR

Yes, Patience, it is! (*Embrace.*)

PATIENCE (*as in a trance*)

We will never, never part!

GROSVENOR

We will live and die together!

PATIENCE

I swear it!

GROSVENOR

We both swear it! (*Embrace.*)

PATIENCE (*recoiling from him*)

But—oh, horror!

GROSVENOR

What's the matter?

Patience

PATIENCE

Why, you are perfection ! A source of endless ecstasy to all who know you !

GROSVENOR

I know I am—well ?

PATIENCE

Then, bless my heart, there can be nothing unselfish in loving *you* !

GROSVENOR

Merciful powers, I never thought of that !

PATIENCE

To monopolize those features on which all women love to linger ! It would be unpardonable !

GROSVENOR

Why, so it would ! Oh, fatal perfection, again you interpose between me and my happiness !

PATIENCE

Oh, if you were but a thought less beautiful than you are !

GROSVENOR

Would that I were ; but candour compels me to admit that I'm not !

PATIENCE

Our duty is clear ; we must part, and forever !

Patience

GROSVENOR

Oh, misery ! And yet I cannot question the propriety of your decision. Farewell, Patience !

PATIENCE

Farewell, Archibald ! But stay !

GROSVENOR

Yes, Patience ?

PATIENCE

Although I may not love *you*—for you are perfect—there is nothing to prevent your loving *me*. I am plain, homely, unattractive !

GROSVENOR

Why, that's true !

PATIENCE

The love of such a man as you for such a girl as I, must be unselfish !

GROSVENOR

Unselfishness itself !

DUET—PATIENCE AND GROSVENOR

PATIENCE

Though to marry you would very selfish be—

GROSVENOR

Hey, but I'm doleful—willow willow waly !

Patience

PATIENCE

You may all the same continue loving me—

GROSVENOR

Hey, but I'm doleful—willow willow waly !

BOTH

All the world ignoring.

{ You } go on adoring—
I'll

Hey willow waly O !

[At the end, *exeunt despairingly, in opposite directions.*

Enter BUNTHORNE, crowned with roses and hung about with garlands, and looking very miserable. He is led by ANGELA and SAPHIR (each of whom holds an end of the rose-garland by which he is bound), and accompanied by procession of maidens. They are dancing classically, and playing on cymbals, double pipes and other archaic instruments.

CHORUS

Let the merry cymbals sound,
Gaily pipe Pandæan pleasure,
With a Daphnephoric bound
Tread a gay but classic measure.

Patience

Every heart with hope is beating,
For at this exciting meeting
Fickle Fortune will decide
Who shall be our Bunthorne's bride !

Enter DRAGOONS, led by COLONEL, MAJOR, and DUKE. They are surprised at proceedings.

CHORUS OF DRAGOONS

Now tell us, we pray you,
Why thus you array you—
Oh, poet, how say you—
What is it you've done ?

DUKE

Of rite sacrificial,
By sentence judicial,
This seems the initial,
Then why don't you run ?]

COLONEL

They cannot have led you
To hang or behead you,
Nor may they *all* wed you,
Unfortunate one !

CHORUS OF DRAGOONS

Then tell us, we pray you,
Why thus they array you—
Oh, poet, how say you—
What is it you've done ?

Patience

RECITATIVE—BUNTHORNE

Heart-broken at my Patience's barbarity,
By the advice of my solicitor, (*introducing
his Solicitor*)
In aid—in aid of a deserving charity,
I've put myself up to be raffled for !

MAIDENS

By the advice of his solicitor
He's put himself up to be raffled for !

DRAGOONS

Oh, horror ! urged by his solicitor,
He's put himself up to be raffled for !

MAIDENS

Oh, heaven's blessing on his solicitor !

DRAGOONS

A hideous curse on his solicitor !
(*The Solicitor, horrified at the Dragoons'
curse, rushes off.*)

COLONEL

Stay, we implore you,
Before our hopes are blighted !
You see before you
The men to whom you're plighted !

Patience

CHORUS OF DRAGOONS

Stay we implore you,
For we adore you;
To us you're plighted
To be united—
Stay, we implore you !

SOLO—DUKE

Your maiden hearts, ah, do not steel
To pity's eloquent appeal,
Such conduct British soldiers feel.

(*Aside to Dragoons.*) Sigh, sigh, all sigh !

[*They all sigh.*]

To foeman's steel we rarely see
A British soldier bend the knee,
Yet, one and all, they kneel to ye—

(*Aside to Dragoons.*) Kneel, kneel, all kneel !

[*They all kneel.*]

Our soldiers very seldom cry,
And yet—I need not tell you why—
A tear-drop dews each martial eye !

(*Aside to Dragoons.*) Weep, weep, all weep !

[*They all weep.*]

ENSEMBLE

Our soldiers very seldom cry,
And yet—I need not tell you why—

Patience

A tear-drop dews each manly eye !
Weep, weep, all weep !

BUNTHORNE (*who has been impatient during this appeal*)

Come, walk up, and purchase with avidity,
Overcome your diffidence and natural timidity,
Tickets for the raffle should be purchased with
avidity,

Put in half a guinea and a husband you may
gain—

Such a judge of blue-and-white, and other kinds
of pottery—

From early Oriental down to modern terra-
cotta-ry—

Put in half a guinea—you may draw him in a
lottery—

Such an opportunity may not occur again.

CHORUS

Such a judge of blue-and-white, &c.

(*Maidens crowd up to purchase tickets; during
this Dragoons dance in single file round
stage, to express their indifference.*)

DRAGOONS

We've been thrown over, we're aware,
But we don't care—but we don't care !

Patience

There's fish in the sea, no doubt of it,
As good as ever came out of it,
And some day we shall get our share,
So we don't care—so we don't care !

(*During this, the girls have been buying tickets.*

At last, JANE presents herself. BUNTHORNE looks at her with aversion.)

RECITATIVE

BUNTHORNE

And are you going a ticket for to buy?

JANE (*surprised*)

Most certainly I am; why should not I?

BUNTHORNE (*aside*)

Oh, Fortune, this is hard ! (*Aloud.*) Blindfold
your eyes:

Two minutes will decide who wins the prize !

(*Girls blindfold themselves.*)

CHORUS OF MAIDENS

Oh, Fortune, to my aching heart be kind !

Like us, thou art blindfolded, but not blind !

(*Each uncovers one eye.*)

Just raise your bandage thus, that you may see,
And give the prize, and give the prize to me !

(*They cover their eyes again.*)

BUNTHORNE

Come, Lady Jane, I pray you draw the first !

Patience

JANE (*joyfully*)
He loves me best !

BUNTHORNE (*aside*)

I want to know the worst !
(JANE draws a paper, and is about to open it
when PATIENCE enters. PATIENCE snatches
paper from JANE and tears it up.)

PATIENCE

Hold ! Stay your hand !

ALL (*uncovering their eyes*)
What means this interference ?
Of this bold girl I pray you make a clearance !

JANE

Away with you, and to your milk-pails go !

BUNTHORNE (*suddenly*)
She wants a ticket ! Take a dozen !

PATIENCE

No !

SOLO—PATIENCE (*kneeling to BUNTHORNE*)
If there be pardon in your breast
For a poor penitent,
Who with remorseful thought opprest,
Sincerely doth repent,
If you, with one so lowly, still
Desire to be allied,

Patience

Then you may take me, if you will,
For I will be your bride !

ALL

Oh, shameless one !
Oh, bold-faced thing !
Away you run—
Go, take you wing,
You shameless one !
You bold-faced thing !

BUNTHORNE

How strong is love ! For many and many a
week

She's loved me fondly and has feared to speak,
But Nature, for restraint too mighty far,
Has burst the bonds of Art—and here we are !

PATIENCE

No, Mr. Bunthorne, no—you're wrong again,
Permit me—I'll endeavour to explain !

SONG—PATIENCE

True love must single-hearted be—

BUNTHORNE

Exactly so !

PATIENCE

From every selfish fancy free—

Patience

BUNTHORNE

Exactly so !

PATIENCE

No idle thought of gain or joy
A maiden's fancy should employ—
True love must be without alloy.

ALL

Exactly so !

PATIENCE

Imposture to contempt must lead—

COLONEL

Exactly so !

PATIENCE

Blind vanity's dissension's seed—

MAJOR

Exactly so !

PATIENCE

It follows then, a maiden who
Devotes herself to loving *you* (*indicating*
BUNTHORNE)

Is prompted by no selfish view !

ALL

Exactly so !

SAPHIR (*taking BUNTHORNE aside*)
Are you resolved to wed this shameless one ?

Patience

ANGELA

Is there no chance for any other?

BUNTHORNE (*decisively*)

None! (*Embraces PATIENCE.*)

(ANGELA, SAPHIR, and ELLA take COLONEL, DUKE, and MAJOR down, while Girls gaze fondly at other Officers.)

SESTETTE

I hear the soft note of the echoing voice
Of an old, old love, long dead—
It whispers my sorrowing heart “rejoice”—
For the last sad tear is shed—
The pain that is all but a pleasure we’ll change
For the pleasure that’s all but pain,
And never, oh never, this heart will range
From that old, old love again! (*Girls embrace Officers.*)

CHORUS

Yes, the pain that is all, &c. (*Embrace.*)

As the Dragoons and Girls are embracing, enter GROSVENOR, reading. He takes no notice of them, but comes slowly down, still reading. The Girls are all strangely fascinated by him, and gradually withdraw from Dragoons.

Patience

ANGELA

But who is this, whose god-like grace
Proclaims he comes of noble race?
And who is this whose manly face
Bears sorrow's interesting trace?

ENSEMBLE—TUTTI

Yes, who is this, &c.

GROSVENOR

I am a broken-hearted troubadour,
Whose mind's æsthetic and whose tastes are
pure!

ANGELA

Æsthetic! He is æsthetic!

GROSVENOR

Yes, yes—I am æsthetic
And poetic!

ALL THE LADIES

Then, we love you!

(*The Girls leave Dragoons and group, kneeling, around GROSVENOR. Fury of BUNTHORNE, who recognizes a rival.*)

DRAGOONS

They love him! Horror!

Patience

BUNTHORNE AND PATIENCE

They love him ! Horror !

GROSVENOR

They love me ! Horror ! Horror ! Horror !

ENSEMBLE—TUTTI

GIRLS

Oh, list while we a love confess
That words imperfectly express,
Those shell-like ears, ah, do not close
To blighted love's distracting woes
Nor be distressed, nor scandalized,
If what we do is ill-advised,
Or we shall seek within the tomb
Relief from our appalling doom !

GROSVENOR

Again my cursed comeliness
Spreads hopeless anguish and distress !
Thine ears, O Fortune, do not close
To my intolerable woes.
Let me be hideous, under-sized,
Contemned, degraded, loathed, despised,
Or bid me seek within the tomb
Relief from my detested doom !

PATIENCE

List, Reginald, while I confess
A love that's all unselfishness ;

Patience

That it's unselfish, goodness knows,
You won't dispute it, I suppose.
For you are hideous—under-sized,
And everything that I've despised,
And I shall love you I presume,
Until I sink into the tomb !

BUNTHORNE

My jealousy I can't express,
Their love they openly confess;
His shell-like ear he does not close
To their recital of their woes.
I'm more than angry and surprised—
I'm pained, and shocked, and scandalized;
But he shall meet a hideous doom
Prepared for him by—I know whom !

The Ladies are all grouped around GROSVENOR.
BUNTHORNE stands apart, meditating vengeance on GROSVENOR.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE—A GLADE

On the left a small sheet of water. JANE is discovered leaning on a violoncello, upon which she presently accompanies herself.

JANE

The fickle crew have deserted Reginald and sworn allegiance to his rival, and all, forsooth, because he has glanced with passing favour on a puling milkmaid ! Fools ! of that fancy he will soon weary—and then I, who alone am faithful to him, shall reap my reward. But do not dally too long, Reginald, for my charms are ripe, Reginald, and already they are decaying. Better secure me ere I have gone too far !

RECITATIVE—JANE

Sad is that woman's lot, who year by year,
Sees, one by one, her beauties disappear,
When Time, grown weary of her heart-drawn
 sighs,
Impatiently begins to "dim her eyes!"

Compelled, at last, in life's uncertain gloamings,
To wreath her wrinkled brow with well-saved
 “combing,”

Reduced, with rouge, lip-salve, and pearly grey,
To “make up” for lost time, as best she may !

SONG—JANE

Silvered is the raven hair,
 Spreading is the parting straight,
Mottled the complexion fair,
 Halting is the youthful gait,
Hollow is the laughter free,
 Spectacled the limpid eye—
Little will be left of me
 In the coming by and bye !
Fading is the taper waist,
 Shapeless grows the shapely limb,
And although securely laced,
 Spreading is the figure trim !
Stouter than I used to be,
 Still more corpulent grow I—
There will be too much of me
 In the coming by and bye !

[*Exit JANE.*

Enter GROSVENOR, followed by maidens, two and two, each playing on an archaic instrument, as in Act I. He is reading abstractedly, as

Patience

BUNTHORNE *did in Act I, and pays no attention to them.*

CHORUS OF MAIDENS

Turn, oh turn in this direction,
Shed, oh shed a gentle smile,
With a glance of sad perfection
Our poor fainting hearts beguile !
On such eyes as maidens cherish
Let thy fond adorers gaze,
Or incontinent y perish
In their all-consuming rays !

(*He sits—they group around him.*)

GROSVENOR (*aside*)

The old, old tale. How rapturously these maidens love me, and how hopelessly ! Oh, Patience, Patience, with the love of thee in my heart, what have I for these poor mad maidens but an unvalued pity ? Alas, they will die of hopeless love for me, as I shall die of hopeless love for thee !

ANGELA

Sir, will it please you to read to us ? (*Kneels.*)

GROSVENOR (*sighing*)

Yes, child, if you will. What shall I read ?

ANGELA

One of your own poems.

Patience

GROSVENOR

One of my own poems? Better not, my child. *They* will not cure thee of thy love.

ELLA

Mr. Bunthorne used to read us a poem of his own every day.

SAPHIR

And, to do him justice, he read them extremely well.

GROSVENOR

Oh, did he so? Well, who am I that I should take upon myself to withhold my gifts from you? What am I but a trustee? Here is a decalet—a pure and simple thing, a very daisy—a babe might understand it. To appreciate it, it is not necessary to think of anything at all.

ANGELA

Let us think of nothing at all!

GROSVENOR *recites*

Gentle Jane was as good as gold,
She always did as she was told;
She never spoke when her mouth was full,
Or caught blue-bottles their legs to pull,
Or spilt plum jam on her nice new frock,
Or put white mice in the eight-day clock,

Patience

Or vivisected her last new doll,
Or fostered a passion for alcohol.
And when she grew up she was given in mar-
riage
To a first-class earl who keeps his carriage !

GROSVENOR

I believe I am right in saying that there is not one word in that decalet which is calculated to bring the blush of shame to the cheek of modesty.

ANGELA

Not one; it is purity itself.

GROSVENOR

Here's another.

Teasing Tom was a very bad boy;
A great big squirt was his favourite toy;
He put live shrimps in his father's boots,
And sewed up the sleeves of his Sunday suits;
He punched his poor little sisters' heads,
And cayenne-peppered their four-post beds;
He plastered their hair with cobbler's wax,
And dropped hot halfpennies down their backs.

The consequence was he was lost totally,
And married a girl in the *corps de bally* !

ANGELA

Marked you how grandly—how relentlessly

Patience

—the damning catalogue of crime strode on, till Retribution, like a poised hawk, came swooping down upon the Wrong-Doer? Oh, it was terrible!

ELLA

Oh, sir, you are indeed a true poet, for you touch our hearts, and they go out to you!

GROSVENOR (*aside*)

This is simply cloying. (*Aloud.*) Ladies, I am sorry to distress you, but you have been following me about ever since Monday, and this is Saturday. I should like the usual half-holiday, and if you will kindly allow me to close early to-day, I shall take it as a personal favour.

SAPHIR

Oh, sir, do not send us from you!

GROSVENOR

Poor, poor girls! It is best to speak plainly. I know that I am loved by you, but I never can love you in return, for my heart is fixed elsewhere! Remember the fable of the Magnet and the Churn.

ANGELA (*wildly*)

But we don't know the fable of the Magnet and the Churn!

Patience

GROSVENOR

Don't you? Then I will sing it to you.

SONG—GROSVENOR

A magnet hung in a hardware shop,
And all around was a loving crop
Of scissors and needles, nails and knives,
Offering love for all their lives;
But for iron the magnet felt no whim,
Though he charmed iron, it charmed not him,
From needles and nails and knives he'd turn,
For he'd set his love on a Silver Churn!

ALL

A Silver Churn!

GROSVENOR

A Silver Churn!

His most æsthetic,
Very magnetic
Fancy took this turn—
“If I can wheedle
A knife or needle,
Why not a Silver Churn?”

CHORUS

His most æsthetic, &c.

GROSVENOR

And Iron and Steel expressed surprise,
The needles opened their well-drilled eyes,

Patience

The penknives felt "shut up," no doubt,
The scissors declared themselves "cut out,"
The kettles, they boiled with rage, 'tis said,
While every nail went off its head,
And hither and thither began to roam,
Till a hammer came up—and drove them home.

ALL

It drove them home?

GROSVENOR

It drove them home!

While this magnetic
Peripatetic
Lover he lived to learn,
By no endeavour,
Can magnet ever
Attract a Silver Churn!

ALL

While this magnetic, &c.

[They go off in low spirits, gazing back at him
from time to time.

GROSVENOR

At last they are gone! What is this mysterious fascination that I seem to exercise over all I come across? A curse on my fatal beauty, for I am sick of conquests!

PATIENCE *appears*

Patience

PATIENCE

Archibald !

GROSVENOR (*turns and sees her*)

Patience !

PATIENCE

I have escaped with difficulty from my Reginald. I wanted to see you so much that I might ask you if you still love me as fondly as ever?

GROSVENOR

Love you ? If the devotion of a lifetime——

(*Seizes her hand.*)

PATIENCE (*indignantly*)

Hold ! Unhand me, or I scream ! (*He releases her.*) If you are a gentleman, pray remember that I am another's ! (*Very tenderly.*) But you *do* love me, don't you ?

GROSVENOR

Madly, hopelessly, despairingly !

PATIENCE

That's right ! I never can be yours; but that's right !

GROSVENOR

And you love this Bunthorne ?

PATIENCE

With a heart-whole ecstasy that withers, and

Patience

scorches, and burns, and stings ! (*Sadly.*) It is my duty.

GROSVENOR

Admirable girl ! But you are not happy with him ?

PATIENCE

Happy ? I am miserable beyond description !

GROSVENOR

That's right ! I never can be yours ; but that's right !

PATIENCE

But go now—I see dear Reginald approaching. Farewell, dear Archibald, I cannot tell you how happy it has made me to know that you still love me.

GROSVENOR

Ah, if I only dared—(*Advances towards her.*)

PATIENCE

Sir ! this language to one who is promised to another ! (*Tenderly.*) Oh, Archibald, think of me sometimes, for my heart is breaking ! He is so unkind to me, and you would be so loving !

GROSVENOR

Loving ! (*Advances towards her.*)

Patience

PATIENCE

Advance one step, and as I am a good and pure woman, I scream ! (*Tenderly.*) Farewell, Archibald ! (*Sternly.*) Stop there ! (*Tenderly.*) Think of me sometimes ! (*Angrily.*) Advance at your peril ! Once more, adieu !

[GROSVENOR *sighs, gazes sorrowfully at her, sighs deeply, and exit. She bursts into tears.*

Enter BUNTHORNE, followed by JANE. He is moody and preoccupied.

JANE sings

In a melancholy train,
One and one I walk all day;
Pity those who love in vain—
None so sorrowful as they,
Who can only sigh and say,
Woe is me, alackaday !

BUNTHORNE (*seeing PATIENCE*)
Crying, eh ? What are you crying about ?

PATIENCE

I've only been thinking how dearly I love you

BUNTHORNE

Love me ! Bah !

Patience

JANE

Love him ! Bah !

BUNTHORNE (*to JANE*)
Don't you interfere.

JANE

He always crushes me !

PATIENCE (*going to him*)

What is the matter, dear Reginald ? If you have any sorrow, tell it to me, that I may share it with you. (*Sighing.*) It is my duty !

BUNTHORNE (*snappishly*)
Whom were you talking with just now ?

PATIENCE

With dear Archibald.

BUNTHORNE (*furiously*)
With dear Archibald ! Upon my honour, this is too much !

JANE

A great deal too much.

BUNTHORNE (*angrily to JANE*)
Do be quiet !

JANE

Crushed again !

PATIENCE

I think he is the noblest, purest, and most

Patience

perfect being I have ever met. But I don't love him. It is true that he is devotedly attached to me, but indeed I don't love *him*. Whenever he grows affectionate, I scream. It is my duty! (*Sighing.*)

BUNTHORNE

I dare say.

JANE

So do I! I dare say!

PATIENCE

Why, how could I love him and love you too?
You can't love two people at once!

BUNTHORNE

I don't believe you know what love is!

PATIENCE (*sighing*)

Yes, I do. There was a happy time when I didn't, but a bitter experience has taught me.

BALLAD—PATIENCE

Love is a plaintive song,
Sung by a suffering maid,
Telling a tale of wrong,
Telling of hope betrayed:
Tuned to each changing note,
Sorry when *he* is sad,
Blind to his every mote,
Merry when he is glad!

Patience

Love that no wrong can cure,
Love that is always new,
That is the love that's pure,
That is the love that's true !

Rendering good for ill,
Smiling at every frown,
Yielding your own self-will,
Laughing your tear-drops down,
Never a selfish whim,
Trouble, or pain to stir;
Everything for him,
Nothing at all for her !

Love that will aye endure,
Though the rewards be few,
That is the love that's pure,
That is the love that's true !

[*At the end of ballad exit PATIENCE, weeping.*

BUNTHORNE

Everything has gone wrong with me since
that smug-faced idiot came here. Before that
I was admired—I may say loved.

JANE

Too mild. Adored !

BUNTHORNE

Do let a poet soliloquize ! The damozels used

Patience

to follow me wherever I went; now they all follow him!

JANE

Not all! I am still faithful to you.

BUNTHORNE

Yes, and a pretty damozel *you* are!

JANE

No, not pretty. Massive. Cheer up! I will never leave you, I swear it!

BUNTHORNE

Oh, thank you! I know what it is; it's his confounded mildness. They find me too highly spiced, if you please! And no doubt I *am* highly spiced.

JANE

Not for my taste!

BUNTHORNE (*savagely*)

No, but I am for theirs. But I can be as mild as he. If they want insipidity, they shall have it. I'll meet this fellow on his own ground and beat him on it.

JANE

You shall. And I will help you.

BUNTHORNE

You will? Jane, there's a good deal of good in you, after all!

Patience

DUET—BUNTHORNE AND JANE

JANE

So go to him and say to him, with compliment
ironical—

BUNTHORNE

Sing “Hey to you—

Good day to you”—

And that's what I shall say !

JANE

“Your style is too much sanctified—your cut
is too canonical”—

BUNTHORNE

Sing “Bah to you—

Ha ! ha ! to you”—

And that's what I shall say !

JANE

“I was the beau ideal of the morbid young
aesthetical—

To doubt my inspiration was regarded as heret-
ical—

Until you cut me out with your placidity emet-
ical”—

BUNTHORNE

Sing “Booh to you—

Pooh, pooh to you”—

And that's what I shall say !

Patience.

Both

Sing "Hey to you, good day to you"—

Sing "Bah to you, ha ! ha ! to you"—

Sing "Booh to you, pooh, pooh to you"—

And that's what { you } shall say !
 { I }

BUNTHORNE

I'll tell him that unless he will consent to be
more jocular—

JANE

Say "Booh to you—

Pooh, pooh to you"—

And that's what you should say !

BUNTHORNE

To cut his curly hair and stick an eyeglass in
his ocular—

JANE

Sing "Bah to you—

Ha ! ha ! to you"—

And that's what you should say !

BUNTHORNE

To stuff his conversation full of quibble and of
quiddity—

To dine on chops and roly-poly pudding with
avidity—

Patience

He'd better clear away with all convenient rapidity.

JANE

Sing "Hey to you—
Good day to you"—

And that's what you should say !

BOTH

Sing "Booh to you—pooh, pooh to you"—
Sing "Bah to you—ha ! ha ! to you"—
Sing "Hey to you—good day to you"—

And that's what { I } shall say !
{ you }

[*Exeunt JANE and BUNTHORNE together.*]

Enter DUKE, COLONEL, and MAJOR. They have abandoned their uniforms, and are dressed and made up in imitation of Æsthetes. They have long hair, and other outward signs of attachment to the brotherhood. As they sing, they walk in stiff, constrained and angular attitudes—a grotesque exaggeration of the attitudes adopted by BUNTHORNE and the young ladies in Act I.

TRIO—DUKE, COLONEL and MAJOR

It is clear that mediæval art alone retains its zest,

Patience

To charm and please its devotees we done our
little best.

We're not quite sure if all we do has the Early
English ring;

But, as far as we can judge, it's something like
this sort of thing:

You hold yourself like this (*attitude*),

You hold yourself like that (*attitude*),

By hook and crook you try to look both angular
and flat (*attitude*).

We venture to expect

That what we recollect,

Though but a part of true High Art, will have
its due effect.

If this is not exactly right, we hope you won't
upbraid;

You can't get high Æsthetic tastes, like trousers,
ready made.

True views on Mediævalism Time alone will
bring,

But, as far as we can judge, it's something like
this sort of thing:

You hold yourself like this (*attitude*),

You hold yourself like that (*attitude*),

By hook and crook you try to look both angular
and flat (*attitude*).

Patience

To cultivate the trim
Rigidity of limb,
You ought to get a Marionette, and form your
style on him (*attitude*).

COLONEL (*attitude*)

Yes, it's quite clear that our only chance of making a lasting impression on these young ladies is to become æsthetic as they are.

MAJOR (*attitude*)

No doubt. The only question is how far we've succeeded in doing so. I don't know why, but I have an idea that this is not quite right.

DUKE (*attitude*)

I don't like it. I never did. I don't see what it means. I do it, but I don't like it.

COLONEL

My good friend, the question is not whether we like it, but whether they do. They understand these things—we don't. Now I shouldn't be surprised if this is effective enough—at a distance.

MAJOR

I can't help thinking we're a little stiff at it. It would be extremely awkward if we were to be "struck" so!

COLONEL

I don't think we shall be struck so. Perhaps we're a little awkward at first—but everything must have a beginning. Oh, here they come ! 'Tention !

They strike fresh attitudes as ANGELA and SAPHIR enter.

ANGELA (*seeing them*)

Oh, Saphir—see—see ! The immortal fire has descended on them, and they are of the Inner Brotherhood—perceptively intense and consummately utter ! (*The Officers have some difficulty in maintaining their constrained attitudes.*)

SAPHIR (*in admiration*)

How Botticellian ! How Fra Angelican ! Oh, Art, I thank thee for this boon !

COLONEL (*apologetically*)

I'm afraid we're not quite right.

ANGELA

Not supremely, perhaps, but oh, so all-but ! (*To SAPHIR.*) Oh, Saphir, are they not quite too all-but ?

SAPHIR

They are indeed jolly utter !

Patience

MAJOR (*in agony*)

What do the Inner Brotherhood usually recommend for cramp?

COLONEL

Ladies, we will not deceive you. We are doing this at some personal inconvenience with a view of expressing the extremity of our devotion to you. We trust that it is not without its effect.

ANGELA

We will not deny that we are much moved by this proof of your attachment.

SAPHIR

Yes, your conversion to the principles of Æsthetic Art in its highest development has touched us deeply.

ANGELA

And if Mr. Grosvenor should remain obdurate—

SAPHIR

Which we have every reason to believe he will—

MAJOR (*aside in agony*)

I wish they'd make haste.

ANGELA

We are not prepared to say that our yearning hearts will not go out to you.

Patience

COLONEL (*as giving a word of command*)

By sections of threes—Rapture! (*All strike a fresh attitude, expressive of æsthetic rapture.*)

SAPHIR

Oh, it's extremely good—for beginners it's admirable.

MAJOR

The only question is, who will take who?

SAPHIR

Oh, the Duke choose first, as a matter of course.

DUKE

Oh, I couldn't think of it—you are really too good!

COLONEL

Nothing of the kind. You are a great matrimonial fish, and it's only fair that each of these ladies should have a chance of hooking you.

It's perfectly simple. Observe, suppose you choose Angela, I take Saphir, Major takes nobody. Suppose you choose Saphir, Major takes Angela, I take nobody. Suppose you choose neither, I take Angela, Major takes Saphir. Clear as day!

Patience

QUINTET

DUKE, COLONEL, MAJOR, ANGELA and SAPHIR

DUKE (*taking SAPHIR*)

If Saphir I choose to marry,
I shall be fixed up for life;
Then the Colonel need not tarry,
Angela can be his wife.

(*Handing ANGELA to COLONEL.*)

(DUKE *dances with SAPHIR, COLONEL with ANGELA, MAJOR dances alone.*)

MAJOR (*dancing alone*)

In that case unprecedented,
Single I shall live and die—
I shall have to be contented
With their heartfelt sympathy!

ALL (*dancing as before*)

He will have to be contented
With our heartfelt sympathy !

DUKE (*taking ANGELA*)

If on Angy I determine,
At my wedding she'll appear
Decked in diamond and ermine,
Major then can take Saphir !

(*Handing SAPHIR to MAJOR.*)

(DUKE *dances with ANGELA, MAJOR with SAPHIR, COLONEL dances alone.*)

Patience

COLONEL (*dancing*)

In that case unprecedented,
Single I shall live and die—
I shall have to be contented,
With their heartfelt sympathy !

ALL (*dancing as before*)

He will have to be contented,
With our heartfelt sympathy !

DUKE (*taking both ANGELA and SAPHIR*)

After some debate internal,
If on neither I decide,
Saphir then can take the Colonel,
(*Handing SAPHIR to COLONEL.*)
Angy be the Major's bride !
(*Handing ANGELA to MAJOR.*)

(COLONEL *dances with SAPHIR, MAJOR with ANGELA, DUKE dances alone.*)

DUKE (*dancing*)

In that case unprecedented,
Single I must live and die—
I shall have to be contented
With their heartfelt sympathy !

ALL (*dancing as before*)

He will have to be contented
With our heartfelt sympathy !

Patience

[At the end, DUKE, COLONEL, and MAJOR, and two girls dance off arm in arm.

Enter GROSVENOR

GROSVENOR

It is very pleasant to be alone. It is pleasant to be able to gaze at leisure upon those features which all others may gaze upon at their good will. (*Looking at his reflection in hand mirror.*) Ah, I am a very Narcissus !

Enter BUNTHORNE moodily.

BUNTHORNE

It's no use, I can't live without admiration. Since Grosvenor came here, insipidity has been at a premium. Ah, he is there !

GROSVENOR

Ah, Bunthorne ! come here—look ! Very graceful, isn't it ?

BUNTHORNE (*taking hand mirror*)

Yes, it is graceful.

GROSVENOR (*re-taking hand mirror*)

Oh, good gracious ! not that—this—

BUNTHORNE

You don't mean that ! Bah ! I am in no mood for trifling.

GROSVENOR

And what is amiss ?

Patience

BUNTHORNE

Ever since you came here, you have entirely monopolized the attentions of the young ladies. I don't like it, sir !

GROSVENOR

My dear sir, how can I help it? They are the plague of my life. My dear Mr. Bunthorne, with your personal disadvantages, you can have no idea of the inconvenience of being madly loved, at first sight, by every woman you meet.

BUNTHORNE

Sir, until you came here I was adored!

GROSVENOR

Exactly—until I came here. That's my grievance. I cut everybody out! I assure you, if you could only suggest some means whereby, consistently with my duty to society, I could only escape these inconvenient attentions, you would earn my everlasting gratitude.

BUNTHORNE

I will do so at once. However popular it may be with the world at large, your personal appearance is highly objectionable to *me*.

GROSVENOR

Is it? (*Shaking his hand.*) Oh, thank you! thank you! How can I express my gratitude?

Patience

BUNTHORNE

By making a complete change at once. Your conversation must henceforth be perfectly matter-of-fact. You must cut your hair, and have a back parting. In appearance and costume you must be absolutely commonplace.

GROSVENOR (*decidedly*)

No. Pardon me, that's impossible.

BUNTHORNE

Take care. When I am thwarted I am very terrible.

GROSVENOR

I can't help that. I am a man with a mission. And that mission must be fulfilled.

BUNTHORNE

I don't think you quite appreciate the consequences of thwarting me.

GROSVENOR

I don't care what they are.

BUNTHORNE

Suppose—I won't go so far as to say that I will do it—but suppose for one moment I were to curse you? (GROSVENOR *quails*.) Ah! Very well. Take care.

Patience

GROSVENOR

But surely you would never do that? (*In great alarm.*)

BUNTHORNE

I don't know. It would be an extreme measure, no doubt. Still——

GROSVENOR (*wildly*)

But you would not do it—I am sure you would not. (*Throwing himself at BUNTHORNE's knees, and clinging to him.*) Oh, reflect, reflect! You had a mother once.

BUNTHORNE

Never!

GROSVENOR .

Then you had an aunt! (*BUNTHORNE affected.*) Ah! I see you had! By the memory of that aunt, I implore you to pause ere you resort to this last fearful expedient. Oh, Mr. Bunthorne, reflect, reflect! (*Weeping.*)

BUNTHORNE (*Aside, after a struggle with himself*)

I must not allow myself to be unmanned! (*Aloud.*) It is useless. Consent at once, or may a nephew's curse——

GROSVENOR

Hold! Are you absolutely resolved?

Patience

BUNTHORNE

Absolutely.

GROSVENOR

Will nothing shake you?

BUNTHORNE

Nothing. I am adamant.

GROSVENOR

Very good. (*Rising.*) Then I yield.

BUNTHORNE

Ha! You swear it?

GROSVENOR

I do, cheerfully. I have long wished for a reasonable pretext for such a change as you suggest. It has come at last. I do it on compulsion!

BUNTHORNE

Victory! I triumph!

DUET—BUNTHORNE AND GROSVENOR

BUNTHORNE

When I go out of door,
Of damozels a score
(All sighing and burning,
And clinging and yearning)
Will follow me as before.

Patience

I shall, with cultured taste,
Distinguish gems from paste,
And "High diddle diddle"
Will rank as an idyll,
If I pronounce it chaste !

A most intense young man,
A soulful-eyed young man,
An ultra-poetical, super-aesthetical,
Out-of-the-way young man !

BOTH

A most intense young man, &c.

GROSVENOR

Conceive me, if you can,
An every-day young man:
A commonplace type,
With a stick and a pipe,
And a half-bred black-and-tan;
Who thinks suburban "hops"
More fun than "Monday Pops,"
Who's fond of his dinner,
And doesn't get thinner
On bottled beer and chops.

A commonplace young man,
A matter-of-fact young man,
A steady and stolid-y, jolly Bank-holiday
Every-day young man !

Patience

BUNTHORNE

A Japanese young man,
A blue and-white young man,
Francesca di Rimini, miminy, piminy,
Je-ne-sais-quoi young man !

GROSVENOR

A Chancery Lane young man,
A Somerset House young man,
A very delectable, highly respectable,
Threepenny-'bus young man !

BUNTHORNE

A pallid and thin young man,
A haggard and lank young man,
A greenery-yallery, Grosvenor Gallery,
Foot-in-the-grave young man !

GROSVENOR

A Sewell & Cross young man,
A Howell & James young man,
A pushing young particle—what's the next
article—
Waterloo House young man !

ENSEMBLE

BUNTHORNE

Conceive me, if you can,
A crotchety, cracked young man,

Patience

An ultra-poetical, super-aesthetical,
Out-of-the-way young man !

GROSVENOR

Conceive me, if you can,
A matter-of-fact young man,
An alphabetical, arithmetical,
Every-day young man !

[At the end, GROSVENOR dances off.
BUNTHORNE remains.

BUNTHORNE

It is all right ! I have committed my last
act of ill-nature, and henceforth I am a re-
formed character. (*Dances about stage, hum-
ming refrain of last air.*)

Enter PATIENCE. *She gazes in astonish-
ment at him.*

PATIENCE

Reginald ! Dancing ! And—what in the
world is the matter with you ?

BUNTHORNE

Patience, I am a changed man. Hitherto
I've been gloomy, moody, fitful—uncertain in
temper and selfish in disposition——

PATIENCE

You have, indeed ! (*Sighing.*)

Patience

BUNTHORNE

All that is changed. I have reformed. I have modelled myself upon Mr. Grosvenor. Henceforth I am mildly cheerful. My conversation will blend amusement with instruction. I shall still be æsthetic; but my æstheticism will be of the most pastoral kind.

PATIENCE

Oh, Reginald ! Is all this true ?

BUNTHORNE

Quite true. Observe how amiable I am.
(*Assuming a fixed smile.*)

PATIENCE

But, Reginald, how long will this last ?

BUNTHORNE

With occasional intervals for rest and refreshment, as long as I do.

PATIENCE

Oh, Reginald, I'm so happy ! (*In his arms.*)
Oh, dear, dear Reginald, I cannot express the joy I feel at this change. It will no longer be a duty to love you, but a pleasure—a rapture—an ecstasy !

BUNTHORNE

My darling !

Patience

PATIENCE

But—oh, horror! (*Recoiling from him.*)

BUNTHORNE

What's the matter?

PATIENCE

Is it quite certain that you have absolutely reformed—that you are henceforth a perfect being—utterly free from defect of any kind?

BUNTHORNE

It is quite certain. I have sworn it!

PATIENCE

Then I can never be yours!

BUNTHORNE

Why not?

PATIENCE

Love, to be pure, must be absolutely unselfish, and there can be nothing unselfish in loving so perfect a being as you have now become!

BUNTHORNE

But stop a bit, I don't want to reform—I'll relapse—I'll be as I was—

PATIENCE

No; love should purify—it should never debase.

BUNTHORNE

But I assure you, I—interrupted!

Patience

Enter GROSVENOR, followed by all the young ladies, who are followed by chorus of Dragoons. He has had his hair cut, and is dressed in an ordinary suit of dittos and a pot hat. They all dance cheerfully round the stage in marked contrast to their former languor.

CHORUS—GROSVENOR AND GIRLS

GROSVENOR

I'm a Waterloo House young man,
A Sewell & Cross young man,
A steady and stolid-y, jolly Bank-holiday,
Every-day young man !

GIRLS

We're Swears & Wells young girls,
We're Madame Louise young girls,
We're prettily pattering, cheerily chattering,
Every-day young girls !

GROSVENOR

I'm a Waterloo House young man !

GIRLS

We're Swears & Wells young girls !

GROSVENOR

I'm a Sewell & Cross young man !

Patience

GIRLS

We're Madame Louise young girls !

GROSVENOR

I'm a steady and stolid-y, jolly Bank-holiday,
Every-day young man !

GIRLS

We're prettily patterning, cheerily chattering,
Every-day young girls !

BUNTHORNE

Angela — Ella — Saphir—what—what does
this mean ?

ANGELA

It means that Archibald the All-Right can-
not be wrong; and if the All-Right chooses to
discard æstheticism, it proves that æstheticism
ought to be discarded.

PATIENCE

Oh, Archibald ! Archibald ! I'm shocked—
surprised—horrified !

GROSVENOR

I can't help it. I am not a free agent. I do
it on compulsion.

PATIENCE

This is terrible. Go ! I shall never set eyes
on you again. But—oh joy !

Patience

GROSVENOR

What is the matter?

PATIENCE

Is it quite, quite certain that you will always
be a commonplace young man?

GROSVENOR

Always—I have sworn it.

PATIENCE

Why, then, there's nothing to prevent my
loving you with all the fervour at my command!

GROSVENOR

Why, that's true.

PATIENCE

My Archibald!

GROSVENOR

My Patience! (*They embrace.*)

BUNTHORNE

Crushed again!

Enter JANE

JANE (*who is still æsthetic*)

Cheer up! I am still here. I have never
left you, and I never will!

BUNTHORNE

Thank you, Jane. After all, there is no denying
it, you're a fine figure of a woman!

Patience

JANE

My Reginald!

BUNTHORNE

My Jane!

Flourish. Enter COLONEL, DUKE, and MAJOR.

COLONEL

Ladies, the Duke has at length determined to select a bride! (*General excitement.*)

DUKE

I have a great gift to bestow. Approach, such of you as are truly lovely. (*All come forward bashfully, except JANE and PATIENCE.*) In personal beauty you have all that is necessary to make a woman happy. In common fairness, I think I ought to choose the only one among you who has the misfortune to be distinctly plain. (*Girls retire disappointed.*) Jane!

JANE (*leaving BUNTHORNE's arms.*)

Duke! (*JANE and DUKE embrace.* BUNTHORNE *is utterly disgusted.*)

BUNTHORNE

Crushed again!

FINALE

DUKE

After much debate internal,
I on Lady Jane decide,

Patience

Saphir now may take the Colonel,
Angy be the Major's bride !

(SAPHIR pairs off with COLONEL, ANGELA with
MAJOR, ELLA with SOLICITOR.)

BUNTHORNE

In that case unprecedented,
Single I must live and die—
I shall have to be contented
With a tulip or lily!

(Takes a lily from buttonhole and gazes
affectionately at it.)

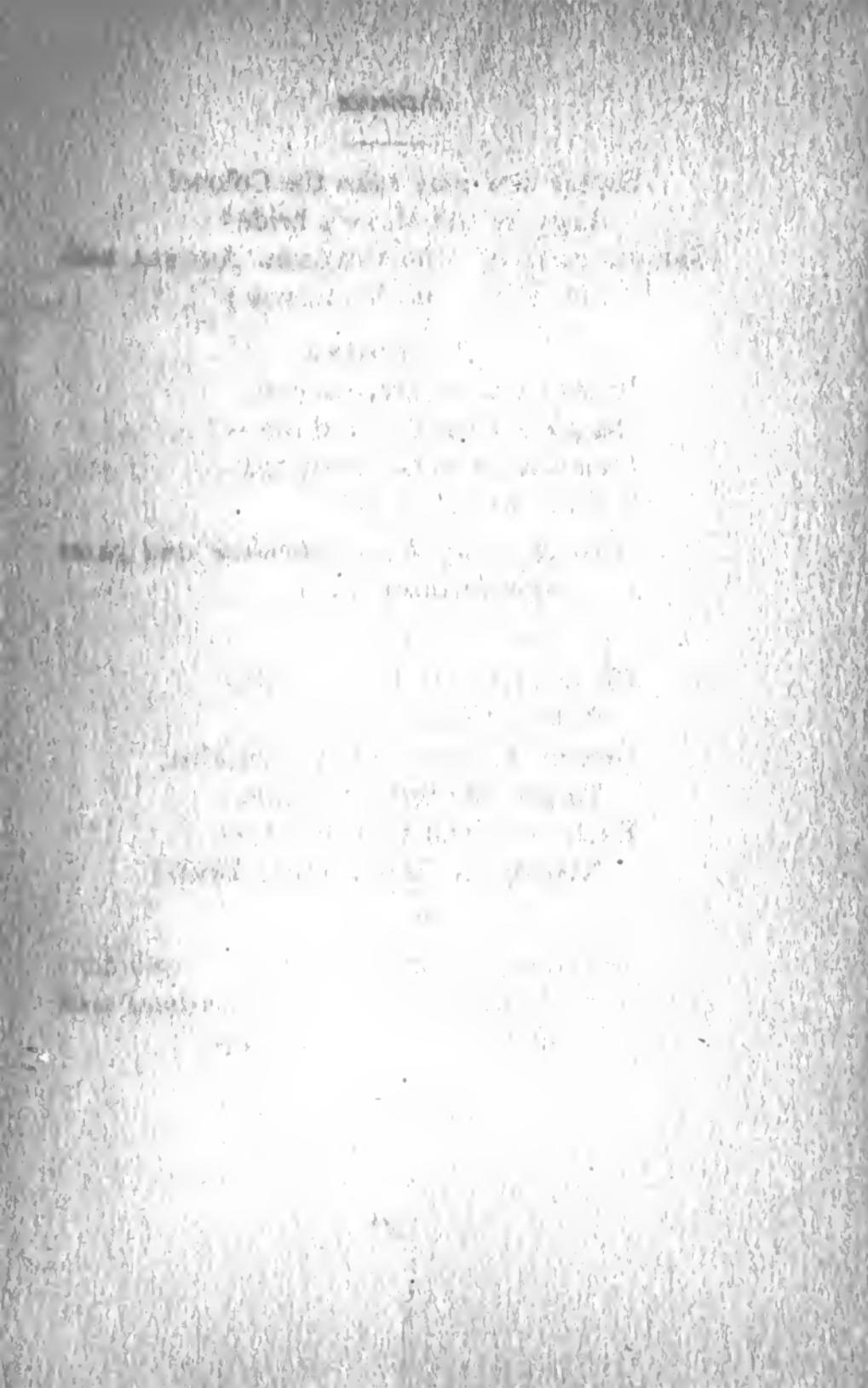
ALL

He will have to be contented
With a tulip or lily!
Greatly pleased with one another,
To get married we decide,
Each of us will wed the other,
Nobody be Bunthorne's Bride !

DANCE

PATIENCE and GROSVENOR embrace.
BUNTHORNE falls, overwhelmed with
distress, in centre of stage.

CURTAIN



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PATIENCE; *or* BUNTHORNE'S BRIDE
by
W. S. Gilbert

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